

M/V *WHITE GULL*
Patuxent River
Solomons vicinity
Calvert County
Maryland

HAER MD-181
HAER MD-181

PHOTOGRAPHS

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

ADDENDUM TO:
M/V *WHITE GULL*
Patuxent River
Solomons vicinity
Calvert County
Maryland

HAER MD-181
HAER MD-181

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

M/V *WHITE GULL*

HAER No. MD-181

Location: Patuxent River, Solomons vicinity, Calvert County, Maryland

Rig/Type of Craft: Cabin cruiser

Trade: Recreation

Official Number: The boat was originally documented with the U.S. Coast Guard and given the number 559012, but it is currently registered in Maryland.

Principal Measurements: Length: 42'-11 ⁵/₁₆"

Propulsion: Gasoline engines

Dates of Construction: 1972-1974

Original Owner: Raymond W. Halt

Present Owner: David Buckler

Disposition: Active

Significance: *White Gull* is significant as an example of a Chesapeake Bay-built cabin cruiser and an example of Wilmer and Creighton Palmer's "deadrise" or V-bottom cabin cruisers.

Historian: Richard Dodds, Calvert Marine Museum, 2010

Project Information: This project is part of the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), a long-range program to document historically significant engineering and industrial works in the United States. The Heritage Documentation Programs of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, administers the HAER program.

White Gull was documented at McCready's Railway in Lusby, Maryland, in November 2010 with the gracious permission of the owner, David Buckler. The documentation was prepared under the direction of Todd Croteau (HAER Maritime Program Coordinator) who produced both the

large-format photography and the measured drawings. Richard Dodds of the Calvert Marine Museum compiled the historical data.

Part I. Historical Information

A. Physical History:

1. Date of construction: 1972-1974

2. Designer/Builder: Creighton W. Palmer

3. Modifications: *White Gull* is little changed from her original 1975 appearance. Handrails have been added to the cabin top, and side railings now run from the bow to a little forward of the cabin door. A small pulpit now adorns the stem to house the anchor. The center window facing forward on the cabin originally looked like those on either side but has been altered to make a small window that can be opened. At some point the canvas covering the decks and cabin top was removed and the wood underneath sealed with West system epoxy. A small hinged mast has been added to the top of the cabin to house navigation lights. In 1996, much of the hull planking was replaced.

B. Historical Context:

The keel for *White Gull* was laid at the boatyard of Creighton W. Palmer of Abell, St. Mary's County, Maryland. Abell stands at the heart of the 7th Election District of St. Mary's County, once the most active wooden boatbuilding center in Southern Maryland. Wilmer Palmer (1900-1986) started a marine railway business in 1931 on the family farm overlooking St. Patrick Creek. The railway stands next to the family home, built in 1896.

Wilmer Palmer started building boats in 1933 and built his first boatshop in 1940, with rails leading inside and a carriage to aid in launching. As a young man, Creighton Palmer helped his father in building and repairing boats before taking over the business in 1958. Both Wilmer and Creighton Palmer are known for their handsome "deadrise" or V-bottom cabin cruisers, although they built workboats as well. By the early 1980s, Creighton Palmer had retired from boatbuilding to concentrate on the railway business. Today, Creighton is semi-retired, and the marine railway sees little activity.

White Gull was originally built for a man in Washington, D.C., who planned to name her *My Queen*. He died before the boat was finished, and she was completed in 1974 for Raymond W. Halt of Temple Hills, Maryland, who was a member of the U.S. Army Band from 1941 until 1976. The Halts had a summer home on Canoe Neck Creek where they kept the boat at a neighbor's dock. The boat was later moved to a covered slip at Kopel's Marina and was eventually sold in 1975. Since then, she has gone through four owners but has remained in St.

Mary's County and is well looked after. For many years she returned to Palmer's railway where Creighton Palmer carried out repairs and maintenance.

C. Operational History:

With Creighton Palmer at the wheel on April 13, 1975, the boat's maiden voyage was recorded in the log by Patricia Halt, wife of the owner. This was subsequently published as a letter to the editor in the St. Mary's newspaper, *The Enterprise*. *White Gull* extensively cruised the many creeks and rivers of Southern Maryland and traveled much of Chesapeake Bay. Her longest voyage is believed to have been to Portsmouth, Virginia, in 1984.

Part II. Structural/Design Information

A. General Description:

Like most wooden boats built in the region, *White Gull* was built by eye, without the use of plans, and is planked fore-and-aft, in the tradition of the 7th District. The hull is built with a chine and the aft portion has a tumblehome. The forward portion of the hull displays outward flare at the bow and a gracefully-curved stem, the trademark of many Palmer-built boats.

White Gull's dimensions are recorded in the *List of Merchant Vessels* as 43' x 13' x 5.1'. The boat was built of white cedar planking over white oak frames spaced 18" apart and fastened with Monel ring nails. The hull is constructed with a hard chine and planked fore and aft. The cabin is built of white cedar and plywood with berths for six.

B. Mechanical Features:

The boat is powered by her original engines—twin Waukesha 302A Marine V-8 gasoline engines.

Appendix



Figure 1: *White Gull* shortly after completion in 1975. Courtesy of David A. Buckler and the Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland.



Figure 2: *White Gull* underway in September 2000. Courtesy of Frederick Millhiser and the Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland.



Figure 3: *White Gull* and *Miss Patty II* hauled out at Palmer's boatyard on St. Patrick Creek, St. Mary's County, Maryland, 2000. *White Gull* was built by Creighton Palmer in 1974, and *Miss Patty*, the following year. Courtesy of Frederick Millhiser and the Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland.



Figure 4: *White Gull* at Palmer's boatyard, 2000. Creighton Palmer can be seen working under the stern of another Palmer-built boat, *Miss Patty II*, in the background. Courtesy of Frederick Millhiser and the Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland.